

2022.06.19

Scripture Reading

Genesis 1 - 2:4 (*adapted from The Message*)

*Narrator:* First this: God created the Heavens and Earth—all you see, all you don't see. Earth was a soup of nothingness, a bottomless emptiness, an inky blackness. God's Spirit brooded like a bird above the watery abyss.

God spoke: “**(1) Light!**”

And light appeared.

God saw that light was good

and separated light from dark.

God named the light Day,

he named the dark Night.

It was evening, it was morning—

Day One.

God spoke: “**(1 and 2) Sky! In the middle of the waters;**

**separate water from water!**”

God made sky.

God separated the water under sky

from the water above sky.

And there it was:

God named sky the Heavens;

It was evening, it was morning—

Day Two.

God spoke: **“(1,2,3) Separate!**

**Water-beneath-Heaven, gather into one place;**

**Land, appear!”**

And there it was.

God named the land Earth.

God named the pooled water Ocean.

God saw that it was good.

God spoke: **“Earth, green up! Grow all varieties**

**of seed-bearing plants,**

**Every sort of fruit-bearing tree.”**

And there it was.

Earth produced green seed-bearing plants,

all varieties,

And fruit-bearing trees of all sorts.

God saw that it was good.

It was evening, it was morning—

Day Three.

God spoke: **“(add 4) Lights! Come out!**

**Shine in Heaven’s sky!**

**Separate Day from Night.**

**Mark seasons and days and years,**

**Lights in Heaven’s sky to give light to Earth.”**

And there it was.

God made two big lights, the larger  
to take charge of Day,  
The smaller to be in charge of Night;  
and God made the stars.  
God placed them in the heavenly sky  
to light up Earth  
And oversee Day and Night,  
to separate light and dark.  
God saw that it was good.  
It was evening, it was morning—  
Day Four.

God spoke: “**(add 5) Swarm, Ocean, with fish and all sea life!**

**Birds, fly through the sky over Earth!”**

God created the huge whales,  
all the swarm of life in the waters,  
And every kind and species of flying birds.  
God saw that it was good.

God blessed them: “Prosper! Reproduce! Fill Ocean!

Birds, reproduce on Earth!”

It was evening, it was morning—  
Day Five.

God spoke: **“(Add 6) Earth, generate life! Every sort and kind:**

**cattle and reptiles and wild animals—all kinds.”**

And there it was:

wild animals of every kind,

Cattle of all kinds, every sort of reptile and bug.

God saw that it was good.

God spoke: **“Let us make human beings in our image, make them**

**reflecting our nature**

**So they can be responsible for the fish in the sea,**

**the birds in the air, the cattle,**

**And, yes, Earth itself,**

**and every animal that moves on the face of Earth.”**

God created human beings;

God created them godlike,

Reflecting God’s nature.

God created them [in gender-diversity].

God blessed them:

**“Prosper! Reproduce! Fill Earth! Take charge!**

**Be responsible for fish in the sea and birds in the air,**

**for every living thing that moves on the face of Earth.”**

Then God said, **“I’ve given you**

**every sort of seed-bearing plant on Earth**

**And every kind of fruit-bearing tree,**

**given them to you for food.**

**To all animals and all birds,**

**everything that moves and breathes,**

**I give whatever grows out of the ground for food.”**

And there it was.

God looked over everything God had made;

it was so good, so very good!

It was evening, it was morning—

Day Six.

Heaven and Earth were finished,

down to the last detail.

By the seventh day

God had finished God’s work. **[Whew!]**

On the seventh day

God rested from all this work. **[Yes!]**

God blessed the seventh day.

God made it a Holy Day

Because on that day God rested from the work,

all the creating God had done **[and it was so very good].**

This is the story of how it all started,

of Heaven and Earth when they were created.

This is a Word of God.

**Thanks be to God.**

All creation is a word of God.

**All creation speaks volumes of God.**

**It's A Wonderful World**  
***Creation as a Blessing***

**Sermon in a sentence**

And God saw that it was good. God's creative masterpiece is unfolding, and God keeps blessing it.

**Telling the Story/ Unpacking Scripture**

God named the land Earth. He named the pooled water Ocean.

God saw that it was good.

Earth produced green seed-bearing plants, all varieties, And fruit-bearing trees of all sorts.

God saw that it was good.

God made two big lights, the larger to take charge of Day, The smaller to be in charge of Night; and he made the stars. God placed them in the heavenly sky to light up Earth And oversee Day and Night, to separate light and dark.

God saw that it was good.

God created the huge whales, all the swarm of life in the waters, And every kind and species of flying birds.

God saw that it was good.

And there it was: wild animals of every kind, Cattle of all kinds, every sort of reptile and bug.

God saw that it was good.

God created human beings; he created them godlike,

Reflecting God's nature. He created them male and female. God blessed them: "Prosper! Reproduce!

Fill Earth! Take charge! Be responsible for fish in the sea and birds in the air, for every living thing that

moves on the face of Earth." Then God said, "I've given you every sort of seed-bearing plant on Earth

And every kind of fruit-bearing tree, given them to you for food. To all animals and all birds, everything that moves and breathes,

I give whatever grows out of the ground for food."

And there it was.<sup>31</sup> God looked over everything he had made; it was so good, so incredibly good! It was a wonderful world!

## SO WHAT?

One of my favorite online devotionals is The Center for Action and Contemplation founded by Franciscan Richard Rohr. In the daily devotion called Creation is Very Good he writes “Both from an ecological perspective and from Genesis’ point of view, goodness resides in the community, the web of life, in the relations of the whole biosphere. All organisms interact constantly with their surroundings, in an endless cycle of giving and receiving. No creature, human or otherwise, can live in isolation. “No matter how sophisticated and complex and powerful our institutions,” said Wendell Berry, “we are still exactly as dependent on the earth as the earthworms.” [1] Wendell Berry, *The Long-Legged House* (Counterpoint: 2012), 90. Our individual happiness rests on the health and well-being of the larger earth ecosystem and the common good. [2] Ellen Bernstein, *The Splendor of Creation: A Biblical Ecology* (The Pilgrim Press: 2005), 119–120.

Creation is the result not of destruction, but of God’s goodness overflowing. . . . God looks upon creation and says, “It is very good.” It’s a declaration, over and over, of creation’s goodness . If we imagine creation to be something as simplistic as a utopian happy-go-lucky place where nothing ever will go wrong, we disparage the beauty and harmony illustrated in the Genesis stories. God’s goodness is not that shallow, and neither is God’s creation. I wonder if there is not something immature about our desire for the garden to be perfect. . . .

A more appropriate view of creation would be not perfection but potential. God designed the world to develop and function in a certain way, while allowing for creation to live freely into its potential. Sometimes creation will live up to and into its potential, while other times it will renounce it. . . . Potential reminds us once again that goodness is both an origin and a goal. It is given to us as a gift, but it is also given to us as a calling. [3Danielle Shroyer, *Original Blessing: Putting Sin in Its Rightful Place* (Fortress: 2016), 66–67.]<sup>i</sup>

In the movie “It’s a Wonderful Life” suicidal George Bailey played by the debonair Jimmy Stewart struggles with the idea of perfection verses potential. life hits an all-time low when he is facing scandal and criminal charges over missing money (that the villain of the drama has secretly found and kept). Only when the angel Clarence shows George what life looks like without him does he realize that perfection is not the goal, that his life actually has potential, that no man is a failure who has friends. It all goes back to the idea that goodness resides in the community, the web of life . No creature, human or otherwise, can live in isolation.

We are created by a God that tells us we are GOOD. We are good enough. But more than that, this web of life, we are responsible for fish in the sea and birds in the air, for every living thing that moves on the face of Earth. We are responsible. And perhaps like George Bailey, we need to be reminded of what happens when we step away from this responsibility.

### **Tell them what you told them**

In Thursday's Indy Star I was struck by the article titled massive flood reshapes Yellowstone. Yellowstone is one of my favorite National Parks. My first visit was over 30 years ago. The article recaps days of rain and rapid snowmelt wrought havoc across parts of southern Montana and northern Wyoming. I as I read the article, I could help but notice the part of the article that talks about climate change. A climate specialist said that warming environment makes extreme weather events more likely than they would have been "without the warming that human activity has caused." Then God said Take charge! Be responsible for fish in the sea and birds in the air, for every living thing that moves on the face of Earth. "It has been a wonderful world", and our God says take charge, be responsible. Can we continue to work at making our world a wonderful world?

We were created to be creative; may we find new and different ways to be creative in caring for creation. AMEN

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<sup>1</sup> [Creation Is Very Good — Center for Action and Contemplation \(cac.org\)](http://cac.org)